

SYLLABUS

course description

The course belongs to the class “caratterizzante” (obbligatoria) in the MA in Eco-Social Design (LM-12). This course is a compulsory subject in the area “Projects”

Course title	hope – reclaiming the future Area: Projects 2 – Design 2
Course code	96101
Scientific sector	ICAR/13 – Design e comunicazioni multimediali
Degree	Master in Eco-Social Design (LM-12)
Semester	II
Year	1st and 2nd
Credits	12
Modular	No
Lecturer Group A	Secil Ugur Yavuz Office: F4.01a, e-mail: secil.uguryavuz@unibz.it Webpage: https://www.unibz.it/it/faculties/design-art/academic-staff/person/36117-secil-ugur-yavuz
Lecturer Group B	Kris Krois office F4.06a, e-mail: Kris.Krois@unibz.it tel. +39 0471 015224 Webpage: https://www.unibz.it/en/faculties/design-art/academic-staff/person/893-kris-krois

Scientific sector of the lecturer	Prof. Kris Krois: ICAR/13 Prof. Secil Ugur Yavuz: ICAR/13
Teaching language	English
Total lecturing hours	90+90
Total hours of self-study and/or other individual educational activities	about 210
Attendance	strongly recommended
Prerequisites	-
Course page	www.unibz.it/en/faculties/design-art/master-eco-social-design

Course description

»start [...] not from fear and enclosure, but from hope and overflowing.

Start this book, or start your thesis, your essay, your talk, your thinking, your design, your gardening, your building, your song, your dance not from fear and enclosure but from richness: now is the time for our hearts to dance. Now is the time to write the poetry of overflowing.«

These lines from introduction of *Hope in Hopeless Times* by John Holloway (2022) can serve as an **inspiration and motivation** for all kinds of transformation-engaged activities. For projects and practices aiming at **emancipatory social-ecological transformations**, also the ones developed in Project 2. Projects are developed together with partners in the “real world” and in teams of 2 to 3 students. While the whole group can become a **learning collective**,

making use of the diversity of knowledge and experiences of each person, mutually supporting each other. We would like to co-create a space and process for learning and doing together on-eye level – in the spirit of **commoning, care and circularity**.

Social-ecological transformations require the interplay of many actors – interconnecting, imagining, experimenting, learning, caring and commoning; criticising and supporting, each other; building upon each other, passing on knowledge and narrations in collective actions; joining struggles and celebrations for creating momentum in overcoming patriarchy and capitalism, its power structures and the devastating exploitation of humans and nature, ..., in a »process of change towards a Good Life for All based on solidarity. It involves a radical transformation of the global mode of living and production as well as of political institutions, norms/values and the relationship of humans to the living world.« (ILA Kollektiv, 2019).

With such broad perspectives, the students develop projects in cooperation with external partners, aiming at humble but effective social-ecological transformations. As the first step with the start of the semester, the students get into a dialogue with potential partners in the [Partner Forum](#). As a next step, the students create teams and start defining the project brief, expectations, roles, responsibilities, and the way they will work together with their partner.

Students are supported in the continuous construction of their design-driven projects, from defining the brief to prototyping, testing and reflecting. This goes along with cycles of ideation, research, sketching, quick prototyping and testing, in the atelier, the labs and in the field. Early on students are encouraged to work in exploratory and experimental ways, quickly developing rough mockups, models, sketches, visualisations and prototypes, for making ideas visible, tangible, and thus discussable. The process is supported by the course in *Design Research Project 1 + 2*, and additionally by techniques, methods and reflections deriving from the courses' students choose to do in parallel. The design of objects, spaces, processes, interactive applications and of cross-media communication is understood as an integrated task. Each student team is supported in setting their focus and priorities, in the choice of media and means, tactics and strategies, etc.

Students are encouraged to take risks. Failures, frictions, and contradictions are seen as part of the creative process, and as an occasion to learn, to improve projects and to mature one's own practice. The expected outcome is an eco-social design project, which has been developed, prototyped and tested in real-life situations. Projects are aspiring to enable desirable transformations in concrete ways, but often real transformations need more than one semester. Therefore, it is important to develop projects in ways that enable continuation and future development.

The project outcomes are exhibited at *Gäste–Ospiti–Guests* (GOG), the end-of-semester exhibition of the faculty. The outcomes and key steps need to be well documented using the faculties online showcase system and in a booklet, including a critical reflection of the work and its future perspectives. An essential teaser has to be drafted to be published on [the blog](#) to promote the works, the exhibition and eco-social design as an evolving field.

The project activities go along with inputs, workshops, review & support sessions, reading circles, a community learning session, an excursion, convivial gatherings and the [By Design](#)

[and by Disaster Conference](#), 8–10 May. The conference programme will be a ground for the students to explore diverse topics related to their projects. They can attend talks, workshops, etc. that are related to their projects, and reflect on the annual theme Hope with the lens of their project topic.

The week starts with a plenum, usually on Mondays, at 14:00. Additionally to the mentioned activities, two moments of collective sharing and solidary critic are organised. Students are encouraged to propose and/or self-organise other activities, which enable peer-learning, community and whatever matters to them.

Hope is definitely not the same thing as optimism. It is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out.<

Václav Havel

Transdisciplinary and transformative pedagogies

We aim at transdisciplinary and transformative teaching, learning and doing. We try to integrate A, B and Design Research where it makes sense, and have separate contributions to specific questions. Consequently, the following text describes A and B together, where nothing else is specified. While specific contributions are marked as such. The course will be closely interwoven with the course in Design Research, and loosely connected to all other course in the area Observe, Analyse & Apply and Make & Intervene. Students and teachers are encouraged to create bridges and synergies across courses, including course of other study courses, which they can choose as Free Choice. These study Master programs offer particularly relevant courses: [Environmental Management of Mountain Areas](#), [Innovation and Research for Social Work and Social Education](#), [Entrepreneurship and Innovation](#). In particular for students, who did not study design or art before, we recommend courses the Bachelor in Design & Art

Educational objectives

Students will be able to:

- develop projects in eco-social design from problem finding to prototyping
- collaborate with partners, experts and other designers to develop, prototype and test an integrated project;
- analyse the context of projects, conceptually frame them and explore potentials

- create and develop projects in an integrated way, with an interplay of diverse elements like social interactions, spaces, products, services, cross-media communication, etc.
- think, communicate and act across diverse areas and disciplines. Apply and integrate instruments and knowledge from Design Research and from the chosen courses in the areas *Observe Analyse & Apply* and *Make & Intervene*. Find for synergies across all areas
- make complex issues tangible by design, visualization and storytelling
- collaborate with partners and experts and other designers to develop and implement an integrated project
- prototype, and partially implement and test projects
- learn quickly and adapt to given situations and their contexts
- propose and develop projects which will contribute to local development while considering the global context, starting from a “glocal” vision, which “focuses on the global and planetary dimension and the local one at the same time” (from the Dizionario Treccani);
- integrate socio-economic aspects and sustainability requirements in project design
- adopt and invent project methods that comply with the requirements and with the needs of the project and its stakeholders
- work with interdisciplinary, international and multidisciplinary teams
- organize and manage creative processes
- organize, manage and motivate a team
- develop an individual way of thinking, leading to critical judgements and self-assessments. Apply critical thinking as it is taught in the area *Observe, Analyse & Apply*
- balance inspiration and systematic planning
- balance more intuitive ways of working with more analytical ones
- design by taking into account the needs and desires of a given territory, of a situation/set of circumstances, of a specific group of people, thanks to the ability of observing, listening, interacting and mediating amongst various stakeholders involved in the project. Apply methods learned in the area *Observe, Analyse & Apply*

List of topics covered

Critical thinking and creative doing, social-ecological transformation, eco-social design, project development, care, commoning, intersectional feminism, transformative pedagogies and experimental learning

Specific part (Object–Space–Services) – Project description group A (Prof. Ugur Yavuz):

Sustainable design for product, service, system and experience, human-centred design.

Specific part (Communication–Interaction–Services) – Project description group B (Prof. Krois)

Transformation strategies, visual communication, social interaction design, outreach

Teaching format

Project-work with a balanced mix of lectures, exercises, labs, workshops, presentations, and reviews (individually and in groups);

Additionally: interventions by external experts and eventually (small) excursions

Lectures and presentations, workshops and group discussions, collective sessions for co-creation, solidary critic and interconnections, review & support sessions, guest events, site explorations, sharing of case studies, reading circles, and whatever turns out to facilitate transdisciplinary and transformative learning.

Learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding

- understand the potential and restrictions of given settings, the connected issues and actors / stakeholders, considering available capacities, recourses, instruments and technologies
- understand the requirements and potentials of a project, including all the above mentioned

Applying knowledge and understanding

- be able to conceptually frame projects, integrating competencies and knowledge from Design Research and from courses of the area *Observe, Analyse & Apply*
- be able to co-create original ideas for effective projects, aiming at desirable and viable Eco-Social transitions
- be able to develop effective projects in given situations (see above) with the above-mentioned aims
- setup and organize a project according to its requirements, across all phases: initial research, finding, project development, exploration and experimentation, prototyping, testing and publishing / exhibiting.
- be able to design and build mockups, functional models and/or other artefacts, which make the project tangible and testable, integrating methods and skills from courses of the area *Make & Intervene*

- Integrate approaches, knowledge, methods, competences, skills and technologies from multiple fields and (design) disciplines

Making judgements

- be able to critically assess potentials and restrictions of given situations and settings (see above), and estimate strength, challenges, risks and prospects
- be able to review projects critically, to understand what is working, what could be improved (and how)
- apply instruments and knowledge from other courses, regard to making judgments, in particular critical thinking as learned in courses of the area *Observe, Analyse & Apply*

Communication skills

- think, communicate and act across diverse areas and disciplines
- be able to present and discuss the own project successfully (in diverse settings, using appropriate media and modes)
- be able to communicate and collaborate in teams, with partners, stakeholders and potential users or audiences

Learning skills

- learn quickly and adapt to given situations and their contexts
- understand own capacities and limitations, and understand, where, when and how to involve other experts / partners, for certain competences, roles and tasks

Group A (Prof. Ugur)

Knowledge and understanding

- understand basic methods, tools and strategies of innovation process and creative problem solving (understand, systemize, create) for the design of objects, services, spaces and interventions
- understand the key features of a human-centred approach
- learn conceptual, transdisciplinary and experimental thinking
- learn basic knowledge of Social Entrepreneurship
- understand the different aspects and impacts of design at social, environmental, political and functional levels around your defined problem space
- understand the approach of holistic solution ecosystems - in terms of value chains, socio-economic strategies, systems, relationships and processes
- The focus within this spectrum depends on the needs and interest of each student and each project. The main part of the teaching is conducted through individual consultancies of project teams and single students.

Group B (Prof. Krois)

Knowledge and understanding

- understand basic methods, strategies and tactics of project development, communication design, and social interaction design oriented towards social-ecological transformation. The focus within this spectrum (and beyond) depends on the interest of each student and on the needs of their project as if the main part of the teaching happens in individual consultancies of project teams and single students.

Assessment

At the end of the semester, students exhibit, present, and critically discuss their work and its future perspectives. Additionally, they submit a document, laying out the conceptual framing, an analysis of contexts and backgrounds, theoretical underpinnings, empirical data, transformation strategy and tactics, case studies, a documentation of the iterative development process, pointing to key moments and decisions, showing activities and prototypes, maps of partners/stakeholders/allies, critical reflections, possible economic foundations, future perspectives, and everything that matters for the project and practice.

Each project and practice is exhibited at the end of the semester in the frame of the GOG exhibition of the faculty. In this context, works need to communicate with and appeal to a wide audience. The design of the exhibition itself is seen as part of the work itself.

The complete assessment will be based on all elements: the exam presentation and discussion, the submitted document and the exhibition. Additionally, the development process and engagement throughout the semester, also beyond the own project, is taken into account.

A short documentation needs to be submitted to the faculties online showcase. It needs to speak to all potentially interested audiences, such as current and future students, existing and future external partners, stakeholder and funders, and all, who could benefit from the projects and practices and support them.

Assessment language: English

Evaluation criteria and criteria for awarding marks

1. **Eco-Social agency**
(Potential) contribution to emancipatory social-ecological transformation
2. **Qualities of designed artefacts**
Aesthetic and technical qualities, and in how far these qualities foster the eco-social

agency. How they build upon the state of the art in design and art. Boldness and vigour of experimentation and design exploration.

3. **Conceptual framing, reflection and future perspectives**

Clarity and coherence of the conceptual framing; synthesis of the theoretical underpinnings, empirical basis and transformation strategy; understanding of context and backgrounds; relevance of case studies; planning of and learnings from the iterative development process; critical reflections, possible economic foundations, and future perspectives.

4. **Relations, processes, and organisation**

Quality of relations and processes with the project team, collaborators, partners, stakeholders and other actors. Organising of time, resources, and persons ("project management").

5. **Storytelling**

Effectiveness and potential in communicating the project to relevant publics. Quality of presentation techniques and narrative. How well the story attracts attention, convinces and touches audiences. Defence of proposition and response to critics.

How elements and qualities discussed under 2 – 5 are contributing to (or hindering) emancipatory social-ecological transformation (criterium #1).

The development over the entire semester and the overall process are taken into account.

Required readings

A selection of short texts, which are used for the *Reading Circles*. To be provided, at the latest, one week before each *Reading Circle*.

Supplementary Readings and other inspirations

Brand, U., Wissen, M. (2018). What Kind of a Great Transformation? The Imperial Mode of Living as a Major Obstacle to Sustainability Politics. In: GAIA – Ecological Perspectives for Science and Society 27(3), 287-292.; ([PDF](#))

Brave New Alps, Elzenbaumer, B., Franz, F. (2021). Design(ers) Beyond Precarity: proposals for everyday action. Design Struggles: Intersecting Histories, Pedagogies, and Perspectives.

Ceschin F., Gaziulusoy, I. (2019) Design for sustainability: a multi-level framework from products to socio-technical systems, Routledge.

Design Studio for Social Intervention (2020). Ideas, Arrangements, Effects: Systems Design and Social Justice. Colchester, MA: Minor Compositions ([PDF](#))

Escobar, Arturo, Michal Osterweil, Kriti Sharma (2024). Relationality. An Emergent Politics of Life Beyond the Human. Bloomsbury Publishing

Gründl, Harald, Ulrike Haele, Marco Kellhammer, Christina Nägele (IDRV): [Tools for the Design Revolution. A handbook for sustainable design strategies](#), Institute of Design Research Vienna

German Version: [Werkzeuge für die Designrevolution. Ein Handbuch für zukunftsfähige Designstrategien](#)

Krasny, A., Fitz, E. (2019): [Critical Care. Architecture and Urbanism for a Broken Planet](#), MIT Press

Habermann, Friederike (2016): ECOMMONY – re-care to mutuality, Chapter 1: The Favour of the Day ([unpublished translation](#))

Original (in German language): Ecommony. UmCARE zum Miteinander, Ulrike Helmer Verlag ([PDF](#), CC BY-NC-SA)

Helfrich, S. and Bollier, D. (2019). Free, Fair, and Alive – The Insurgent Power of the Commons, New Society Publishers, <https://freefairandalive.org/>

Holloway, J. (2022). Hope in Hopeless Times. Pluto Press

ILA Kollektiv (2019). At the Expense of Others? How the imperial mode of living prevents a good life for all. oekom, Munich ([PDF](#))

kollektiv orangotango (eds. 2024). Beyond Molotovs – A Visual Handbook of Anti-Authoritarian Strategies. Bielefeld: transcript Verlag

Krois, Kris, María Menéndez-Blanco, Anja Salzer (2024). Assemblies of Power. Can Climate Citizen Assemblies drive Emancipatory Social-Ecological Transformations?, in El Moussaoui, M., Krois, Palmieri, T. eds. *Power in Transformation. Design and Art as Catalysts of Change*. Munich: oekom

LeGuin, U. K. (1986). [The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction](#).

Pater, R. (2021). Caps Lock: How Capitalism Took Hold of Graphic Design, and How to Escape from It. Valiz Press.

Risler, Julia & Pablo Ares / Iconoclasistas (2018). [Manual of Collective Mapping](#)

Sarbo, Bafta & Eleonora Roldán MENDÍVIL (2025). The Diversity of Exploitation. On the Critique of Dominant Antiracism. Brill

Saito, Kohei (2024). Slow Down. The Degrowth Manifesto. Astra Publishing House

Wizinsky, M. (2022). Design after Capitalism. Transforming Design Today for an Equitable Tomorrow, The MIT Press

Welzer, Harald (2019). [Modular Revolution](#) (p. 185 - 192; English translation KK).

In *Alles könnte anders sein. Eine Gesellschaftsutopie für freie Menschen*, S. FISHER, ([scan \(PDF of chapter Modulare Revolution\)](#))